



The Den . . . In Focus

Why Do Utilities Get Disconnected?

Utility disconnections are authorized to minimize the financial risk to the City, its citizens, and utility customers. Also, disconnections are used as a collection tool so our uncollected debt is kept to a minimum and the City can avoid utility rate increases due to high, uncollected funds.

Utilities are disconnected for non-payment of utility bills/deposits, breaking payment agreements, failure to repay checks returned unpaid by banks, or when no one will take responsibility for a utility account by completing our utility application. The City is not-for-profit and strives to keep utility rates low, so the City's policies are sometimes more strict than large, for-profit public utilities.

At least 7 days before authorizing a utility disconnection, customers are sent hand-delivered notices. In addition, although not required by ordinance, most customers are also mailed notifications that disconnection notices have been delivered to them with what is required to avoid disconnection, and an attempt is made to notify customers by phone of their pending disconnection. When customers are behind on their utility payments, letters are mailed out 20 days prior to the issuance of the disconnection notice, warning them of the possibility of disconnection and giving them phone numbers of local agencies that might be able to assist them in paying their bills if they are experiencing financial difficulties.

All of these contact attempts are made because the focus of the Utility Billing and Collections office is to collect monies due the City for utilities a customer has already used. This protects the financial interest of the City and its citizens,

and prevents utility rate increases because of uncollected utility payments. Please call 377-4426 with questions or for details.

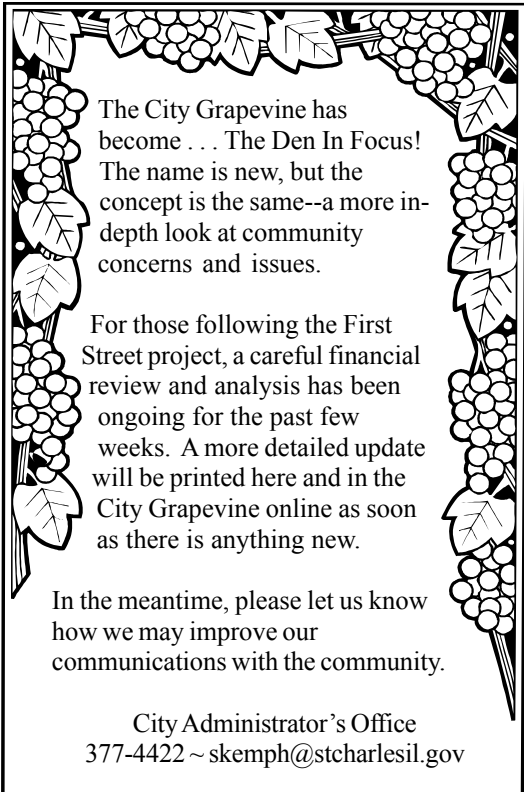
Speeding

"Cars are speeding on my street!"

This is a comment the Police Department hears all too often. Speeding on residential streets is a problem throughout the community, and traffic enforcement is the

best way to deter speeders. There are not enough officers, though, to cover every street, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The first step to deter speeders starts with residents themselves. Recent studies show that violators often live in the area in which they are speeding.

Is everyone speeding or is it just a few cars? When does it occur? Do the alleged offenders live in the area? These are questions the Police Traffic Division will ask of those who report a speeding problem.



The City Grapevine has become . . . The Den In Focus! The name is new, but the concept is the same--a more in-depth look at community concerns and issues.

For those following the First Street project, a careful financial review and analysis has been ongoing for the past few weeks. A more detailed update will be printed here and in the City Grapevine online as soon as there is anything new.

In the meantime, please let us know how we may improve our communications with the community.

City Administrator's Office
377-4422 ~ skemph@stcharlesil.gov

Next, we will put traffic counters in the problem area(s) to determine the exact speed of the vehicles. These MPH numbers often are surprisingly within the "normal range of speed." If not, the counters can direct us to the times of day when the most violations occur, and enforcement actions will then be taken.

Unfortunately, speed bumps are not an option. Stop signs also cannot be installed to slow traffic, so ultimately, there is no magic bullet to stop speeders. The most effective deterrent are residents themselves, who can help control the speeding problem by obeying the posted speed limits and gathering as much information about the problem as possible before contacting the Police Department. Please call the Police Department at 377-4435 with questions.

Traffic Facts

Traffic on Main Street/Rte. 64 continues to be a concern for many residents and businesses in the community. Some questions have been addressed in previous newsletter supplements. We thought some recently collected statistics might also be helpful. The following information is provided by Nu-metrics. These are devices that measure the traffic volume/speed/frequency in one lane of traffic, with a 10% error rate. Any data for two-lane roads reflect the average of the combined lanes. Please visit www.nu-metrics.com for more information on these devices, and contact the City Engineering office at 377-4486 with additional questions or concerns regarding traffic issues.

Study Date: May 25-26, 2005

Volume (Average number of cars over a 24-hour period based on 2-way traffic on the Main Street bridge):

Year	# of Vehicles
2005	45,229
2004	43,589
2003	45,310

Types of Vehicles:

Of the 45,229 vehicles in 2005, 1,957 (4%) were large (i.e. trucks); 1,135 were small trucks; 395 were trucks/buses; and 427 (1%) were tractor-trailers.

Frequency (Peak travel times on Main Street Bridge:

Peak is a consecutive period of more than 400 vehicles in a 15-minute increment (traveling in one direction).

Eastbound - 6:30 - 8 a.m.

Westbound - 4 - 7 p.m.

Speed (average):

The percentage of vehicles exceeding the posted limit has dropped considerably between 2004 and 2005 (43.5% to 9.56%, one lane, westbound).

Eastbound - 27 mph

Westbound - 22.5 mph

Time to Travel (averages between 7th St. and 7th Ave. on Main St. through the downtown):

City staff record travel times weekly to verify signal timings during the peak times.

2005 Eastbound - AM - 3 min., 12 sec.
PM - 3 min., 17 sec.

2005 Westbound - AM - 2 min., 50 sec.
PM - 3 min., 44 sec.

Water Information

How can I learn more about what is in my tap water?

The results of water sampling and analysis are published annually in the City's Water Quality Report. Copies of the report are delivered to every customer each June and posted online at www.stcharlesil.gov.

How will I know if my water isn't safe?

The City is required to notify residents by newspaper, mail, radio, TV or hand delivery if water doesn't meet EPA or state standards or if there is a water emergency. The notice will describe any precautions you need to take, such as boiling water.

How can I get my water tested?

The Water Quality Report documents contaminants and levels found in drinking water. The City conducts sampling that meets the state and federal requirements. Residents can order additional tests for specific contaminants that vary among homes. Call the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency at (217) 785-0561 for a list of certified laboratories. Water tests start at around \$15.

What is a drinking water standard?

Under the authority of the Safe Drinking Water Act, the EPA sets standards for approximately 90 contaminants. For each contaminant, the EPA sets a legal limit, or maximum contaminant level. The City may only provide water that meets these standards. Drinking water is reasonably expected to contain small amounts of some contaminants, as long as they occur below the EPA's standards and do not pose a significant health threat.

What about bottled water?

The EPA sets standards for tap water; the Food and Drug Administration sets bottled water standards. Bottled water and tap water are both safe to drink if they meet these standards. Some bottled water is treated more than tap water, while some is treated less or not at all. Consumers should read the labels carefully.